



Policy Overview: “Joint Processing” of CalFresh Applications by SSA and CWDs

Hosted by CDSS CalFresh
and Nutrition Branch

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May 21, 2019

How to Listen In

- This webinar will be held in “listen only” mode.
- There are two ways to connect to audio:
 1. Via phone
 2. Via computer



How to Ask Questions

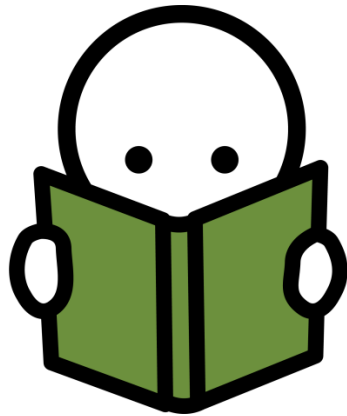
- On-line through GoToWebinar
 - Type your questions into the question pane on your control panel (right hand side of the screen) anytime during the presentation.
 - Responses to questions will be provided at the end of the webinar.
 - The slides and webinar recording will be posted to the Expanding CalFresh Training webpage: www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFreshSSI/Training.

Agenda

- Background
 - Expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients
 - What is “joint processing” of CalFresh applications?
- SSA Informing and Screening
- SSA Application Assistance Procedures
- CWD Processing of “SSA Assisted” Applications
 - Review of categorical eligibility
- Demo of GetCalFresh.org SSA Edition

Key Resource

- All County Letter [19-44](#) released on May 9, 2019.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

May 9, 2019

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 19-44

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CalWORKs PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CONSORTIA PROJECT MANAGERS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: CALFRESH APPLICATION "JOINT PROCESSING" BY SOCIAL
SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND COUNTY WELFARE
DEPARTMENTS

REFERENCE: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND REIMBURSABLE
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION (RA USDA 180001); [ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\)
1811 \(CHAPTER 35, STATUTES OF 2018\); CA WELFARE AND
INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTIONS 18900.5-900.7; CODE
OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(C.F.R.\) TITLE 7 SECTION
273.2\(k\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(i\)\(1\)\(A\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(i\)\(O\); 7
CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(i\)\(I\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(i\)\(F\); 7 CFR §
273.2\(i\)\(2\)\(i\)\(E\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(f\)\(1\)\(x\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(i\)\(2\)\(v\); 7
CFR § 273.10\(e\)\(2\)\(ii\)\(C\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(i\)\(G\); 7 CFR §
273.2\(f\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(iii\)\(A\); 7 CFR § 273.2\(k\)\(1\)\(i\)\(K\); \[ACL
NO. 18-90; ACL NO. 17-34; AND MANUAL OF POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES \\(MPP\\) § 63-300.5\\(g\\)\]\(#\)](#)

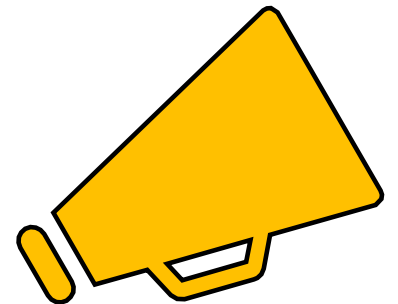
The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with policy
guidance regarding the "joint processing" of CalFresh applications by the Social
Security Administration (SSA) and CWDs for applicants or recipients of Supplemental
Security Income (SSI).



Background

CalFresh Expansion to SSI Recipients

- Starting June 1, 2019, older adults and/or people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income and/or California State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) may be eligible for CalFresh.
- There is NO change or reduction to the SSI/SSP amount.
- For more information, visit the Expanding CalFresh webpage at www.cdss.ca.gov/CalFreshSSI.



Introducing “Joint Processing”

- Under federal SNAP regulations, SNAP applications will be “jointly processed” by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the State agency (aka the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) in California).
- Joint processing applies to households that include only SSI applicant or recipient members.
- SSA technicians will assist these households with completing and submitting a CalFresh application while conducting other business with SSA, at the office or by telephone.

Joint Processing National MOU

- National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SSA and the Food and Nutrition Service applies in all states and explains the SNAP-related services that SSA will provide.
- Guidance provided during this webinar is based on this MOU and federal SNAP regulations.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND
THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
FOR SERVICES RELATED TO THE
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

RAUSDA180001

I. Purpose

This memorandum of understanding and reimbursable agreement (Agreement) between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) explains the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)-related services that SSA will provide for USDA in SSA offices and the terms of the reimbursement that USDA will provide to SSA for these services. Section IV of this Agreement contains a list of these services, which include SSA's operations for taking SNAP applications and other services provided concerning Combined Application Projects (CAPs).

II. Authority

This Agreement is authorized under the Economy Act, 31 U.S.C. § 1535. Other authorities are § 11(i) and (j) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. § 2020(i), (j)), and USDA regulations at 7 C.F.R. § 273.2.

III. Background

A. SNAP Application Assistance for Applicants for or Recipients of Social Security Benefits under Title II or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act

The responsibilities set out in this Agreement generally follow from current statutory processing requirements at § 11(i) and (j) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. § 2020(i), (j)) and SNAP regulations promulgated by USDA in conjunction with SSA at 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(k). For example, SSA is required to inform every applicant for or recipient of social security benefits or SSI (including federally administered supplementary payments, whether mandatory or optional, see 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(k)) about the availability of SNAP benefits. SSA is also required, except in a cash-out State, to offer to take SNAP applications from SSI applicants or recipients who live in households consisting only of SSI applicants or recipients (i.e., pure SSI households), and to timely forward the applications to the appropriate State agency that handles SNAP to determine the applicant's

Important Reminder

SSA joint processing applies only to:

- 1) Households that are conducting business with SSA, such as applying for SSI;
- 2) Households that include only SSI applicant or recipient members; and
- 3) Households that are not already receiving CalFresh, unless their recertification is due.





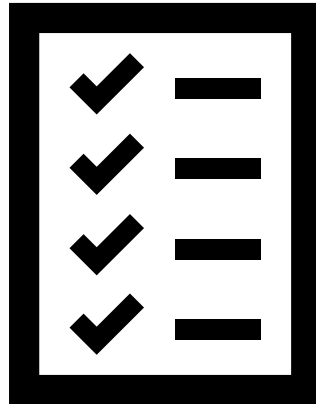
SSA Informing and Screening

SSA Informing

- Whenever a member of a household consisting only of SSI applicants or recipients conducts business with SSA the SSA technician will inform the household of:
 - Their right to apply for SNAP benefits at the SSA office without going to a CWD office; and
 - Their right to apply with the CWD if they choose to do so.

SSA Screening

- The SSA technician will screen households to determine their current CalFresh status and whether they are interested in applying for CalFresh with SSA assistance.



SSA Screening Questions

- The SSA Technician will screen households for potential CalFresh eligibility or CalFresh application status by asking the following questions:
 1. Are you currently receiving CalFresh benefits?
 2. Have you received a recertification notice in the last 30 days?
 3. Have you applied for CalFresh benefits in the last 60 days?
 4. Have you received an unfavorable CalFresh decision?



SSA Screening Continued

- If the household is either :
 1. Not receiving CalFresh, OR
 2. Receiving CalFresh, but needs to complete their recertification, OR
 3. Recently applied for SNAP but was determined ineligible.

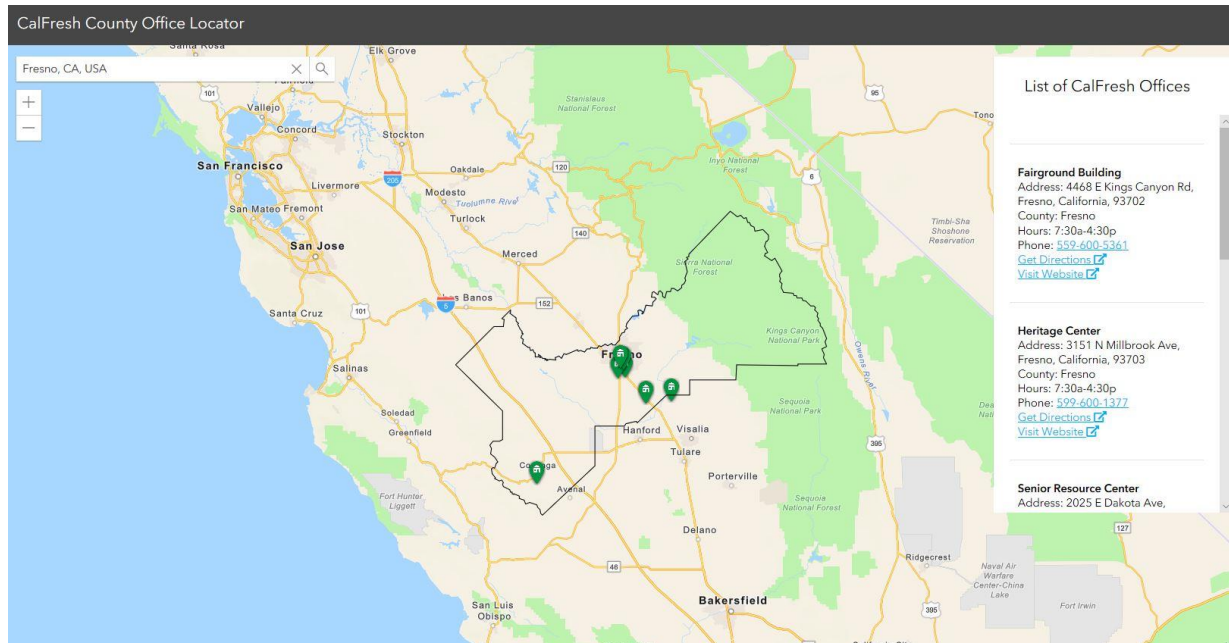
AND

- The household includes only SSI applicant or recipient members.



Households with SSI and non-SSI Members

- The SSA technician will refer households with both SSI and non-SSI applicant or recipient members to:
 - www.getcalfresh.org, or
 - www.benefitscal.org, or
 - The appropriate CWD
 - Using the CDSS [“Find an Office” online tool](#)



SSA Application Assistance

- If SSI applicant or recipient passes screening, then the SSA technician will ask, “**Can I take your CalFresh application today?**”



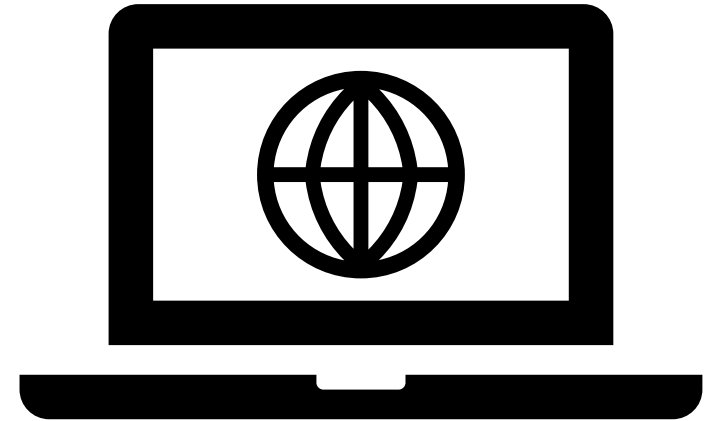


SSA Application Assistance Procedures

Submitting a CalFresh Online Application

- The CDSS and SSA have agreed, with FNS approval, to use the **GetCalFresh.org** application assistance tool as the default method for SSA submission of CalFresh applications.

Note: SSA technicians will use an SSA specific edition of GetCalFresh.org.
We'll have a demo later in the webinar!



GetCalFresh.org for SSA Site

- Special GetCalFresh.org site - only for SSA.
- Access will be limited to SSA technicians.
- Language throughout the site and the legal page has been updated to reflect that the SSA technician is assisting the household.
- CDSS and SSA have agreed, with FNS approval, that the SSA technician can electronically sign on behalf of the household.

GetCalFresh.org vs. Paper

Benefits of using GetCalFresh.org, include:

- Questions have been limited to those that apply to households with only SSI applicant or recipient members.
- No additional time between SSA completion of the application (i.e. beginning date of aid) and submission of the application to the CWD.
- CWDs receive the application like any other GetCalFresh.org application.
- No need for the SSA technician to route a paper application to the correct county.

Note: paper application is still an option if requested by the applicant or if a back-up method is needed. More to come on that.

Paper CalFresh Applications

If a household requests to submit a paper CalFresh application:

- SSA will assist the household with completing and submitting a [Application for CalFresh Benefits \(CF 285\)](#).
- SSA will submit the signed paper application to the appropriate CWD within one business day of receiving the signed application.
- SSA will include the *Social Security Administration Transmittal for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Applications (SSA 4233)* cover sheet when submitting to the CWD.

After SSA Technician Submits CalFresh Application

- SSA Technician provides household with the document: *Information for Households Applying for CalFresh with the Social Security Administration* (CF SSA 1)



Information for Households Applying for CalFresh with the Social Security Administration (CF SSA 1)

The CFA SSA 1 must tell the client:

- How to contact their CWD;
- How to complete the CalFresh application process;
- That they will be notified about their CalFresh eligibility within 30 days;
- Their rights and responsibilities; and
- How and where to obtain an EBT card and PIN, how to use an EBT card, and what can be purchased with an EBT card.

INFORMATION FOR HOUSEHOLDS APPLYING FOR CALFRESH WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION



YOU APPLIED FOR CALFRESH. WHAT'S NEXT?

You completed your CalFresh application with the help of the Social Security Administration (SSA). Here's what will happen next:

- Your local County social services office will process your CalFresh application and make a CalFresh eligibility decision.
- Your County may contact you by mail or by phone to get more information to process your application.
Important: If contacted by phone, the County caller ID for the phone call may come from a "Private," "Unknown," or "County" phone number. Please be sure to answer any calls with these caller IDs for the next 30 days.
- Your County will make an eligibility decision within 30 days of the date you completed your CalFresh application with the help of SSA. If you do not hear from your County within 30 days, contact them.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE

If you need to contact your County social services office for any reason, here's how you can do that:

- Call (877) 847-3663 and enter your ZIP code to be connected to your County by phone. This service is available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Russian. For speech and/or hearing assistance call 7-1-1 Relay.
- Find your local County office at <https://www.calfreshfood.org/>. Choose the "Come In" option and click on the "Find your County office here" link. Once you enter your address, a map will show you the closest County office and give you the office address, phone number, and hours of operation.

If you need any help, a reasonable accommodation, or language services, please request this from your County.

If you want a copy of your CalFresh application, please request this from your County.

HOW TO USE YOUR ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (EBT) CARD

- If your CalFresh application is approved, the County will mail you an EBT card or if you choose, you can come into your County office to pick one up. You can buy groceries with the EBT card.
- When you get your EBT card, sign it. You will also need to set-up a Personal Identification

Number (PIN) to use your EBT card. **Do not give out your PIN number** or keep it with your EBT card. Your County will never ask you for your PIN number.

- If your EBT card is lost, stolen, or destroyed, call (877) 328-9677 or call your County right away. If you think someone knows your PIN and you don't want that person to use your CalFresh benefits, call (877) 328-9677 or call your County right away.
- You can use your EBT card at most grocery stores and some farmer's markets. You cannot use your CalFresh benefits to buy alcohol, tobacco, pet food, some types of hot and prepared foods, or anything that is not food (like toothpaste, soap, or paper towels).

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CALFRESH BENEFITS

There are certain steps you need to take to keep your CalFresh benefits.

1. Report when your income increases and goes over the "Income Reporting Threshold (IRT)"

- Your monthly gross income is the amount of money your household receives before taxes.
- Your County will tell you your household IRT when your CalFresh application is approved.
- Any time your household's gross monthly income goes over the IRT, you must report the new gross monthly income to your County within 10-days of getting it.

My household IRT is:

2. Complete and submit your periodic report (SAR 7) on time

- A SAR 7 is a CalFresh report you must use to provide your County an update on your household's information (income, number of people living in the home, expenses, change of address, etc.)
- Your County will mail you a SAR 7 form and it will tell you the due date.
- You must complete and submit your SAR 7 by the due date. If you are reporting changes, you may need to provide proof. Tell your County if you need help providing proof.

My periodic report (SAR 7) due date is:

3. Complete and submit your recertification application (CF 37) on time

- A CF 37 is a recertification application you must use to make sure you still qualify for CalFresh. You must tell your County information about your household.
- Your County will mail you a recertification application packet or appointment letter and it will tell you the due date.
- You must complete and submit your recertification application by the due date. You may need to provide proof. Tell your County if you need help providing proof.

My recertification application (CF 37) due date is:

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You have the right to:

- Turn in an application for CalFresh giving only your name, address, and signature.
- Be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect, and not be discriminated against.
- Have an interpreter provided at no cost if you need one.
- Ask for help to fill out your application, ask for an explanation of the rules, or ask for help to get proof that is needed.
- Let the County know if you would like someone else to use your benefits for you or help with your CalFresh case (Authorized Representative).
- Get CalFresh benefits within 3 days if you qualify for Expedited Service.
- Get at least 10 days to give the County proof that is needed to make a determination of eligibility.
- Give proof of your household's expenses that may help you get more benefits. Not giving proof to the County is the same as saying that you do not have the expense and you will not be able to get more benefits.
- Withdraw your application at any time prior to the County determining eligibility.
- Get written notice at least 10 days before the County lowers or stops your benefits.
- Discuss and review your case with the County when you ask to do so.
- Report changes that you are not required to report, if doing so may increase your benefits.
- Have information given to the County kept confidential, unless directly related to the administration of County programs.
- Ask for a State hearing within 90 days if you do not agree with the County about your CalFresh case. If you ask for a hearing before an action on your CalFresh case takes place, your CalFresh benefit will stay the same until the hearing or the end of your certification period, whichever is earlier. You can ask the County to let your benefit change until after the hearing to avoid having to pay back any overpaid benefits. If the Administrative Law Judge rules in your favor, the County will give back to you any benefits that are owed to you.
- Ask about your hearing rights or for legal aid referral at the toll-free phone number – (800) 952-5253 – or for hearing or speech impaired who use TDD (800) 952-8349. You may get free legal help at your local legal aid or welfare rights office.
- Bring a friend or someone with you to the hearing if you don't want to go alone.
- Get assistance from the County to register to vote.

You have the responsibility to:

- Give the County all the information needed to determine your eligibility.
- Give the County proof of the information when needed.
- Report changes as required. The County will give you information about what, when, and how to report. If you don't meet your reporting requirements, your case may be closed, or your benefits may be lowered or stopped.
- Fully cooperate with County, State, or Federal personnel if your case is selected for review. The review is to ensure that your eligibility and benefit level is correct and failure to cooperate will result in a loss of your benefits.
- Pay back any benefits that you were not eligible to get.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITION AND COMPLAINT PROCESS

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, USDA Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD 3027) found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/ad-3027-usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form>, and at any USDA office, or contact your County's Civil Rights Coordinator, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form or write to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) address below. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington D.C. 20250-9410

CDSS, Civil Rights Bureau
P.O. Box 944243, M.S. 8-16-70
Sacramento, CA 94244-2430
(866) 741-6241 (toll free)

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov



County Welfare Department Processing of “SSA Assisted” Applications

Important Highlights

When a CWD receives an SSA assisted application from GetCalFresh.org:

- The CWD will be able to identify the application is “SSA assisted”
- The application is signed, the CWD must not require an additional signature

When a CWD receives any SSA assisted application (through GetCalFresh or on paper):

- The household may be categorically eligible
- No interview is required  **Only for SSA assisted applications!!!!**

Categorical Eligibility

- Households in which all members receive or are authorized to receive SSI are *categorically eligible (CE)* for CalFresh
- Categorical eligibility means that certain preliminary eligibility requirements have already been met by participating in another low-income program, including SSI.

Categorical Eligibility Refresher

- Preliminary CalFresh eligibility factors already deemed by the other assistance program include:
 - Resources, gross and net income, social security number, sponsored immigrant information, and residency
- Even if a household is categorically eligible, CWDs must still determine the household's benefit level.
- Categorical eligibility does not result in automatic eligibility, but does mean a household is likely eligible for CalFresh.

A Very Important Note....

Not **ALL** SSA assisted applications are households that are categorically eligible.

- SSA technicians can assist households where:
 - Everyone is an SSI applicant; or
 - Everyone is an SSI recipient; or
 - Everyone is either an SSI applicant or SSI recipient.
- However, only households where everyone is an SSI recipient are categorically eligible.

Let's Review: Who is Categorically Eligible?

Household Type	Can the household apply for CalFresh at SSA Office?	Is the household categorically eligible for CalFresh?
All Members Applied for SSI	Yes	No
All Members Receiving SSI	Yes	Yes
All Members Receiving or Applied for SSI	Yes	No
Only Some Members Receiving or Applied for SSI	No	No

No Interview for Applications Received from SSA

- Households whose CalFresh applications are processed under SSA “joint processing” procedures will **not** be required to go in to a CWD office, or otherwise be subject to a CWD interview.
- The “no interview” requirement applies only to SSA assisted applications accepted either through GetCalFresh.org or on paper.

NOTE: This only applies to SSA assisted applications! All other newly eligible SSI-only households or households with both SSI and non-SSI members must be interviewed per usual!

Processing Applications Received from SSA

The CWD will not contact the household to obtain information to complete the eligibility determination unless:

1. The application is improperly completed;
2. Mandatory verification is missing; or
3. The CWD determines that certain information on the application is questionable.



Proactive Outreach to Increase Benefits

- CWDs may contact the household to determine whether the household incurs expenses that, if verified, may increase benefits. This is not considered an interview.
 - Example: Verification of medical expenses
- Reminder: Households may claim a deduction at any time.



Mandatory Verification

- The CWD must ensure that mandatory information is verified prior to determining initial eligibility.
- CWDs must follow existing Expedited Services rules that allow the verification requirement to be postponed.

NOTE: Most common mandatory verification for this population: unearned income, including the SSI payment amount.

SSI/SSP Payment Verification

- State Data Exchange (SDX) and Beneficiary Data Exchange (BENDEX) are the preferred sources of SSI/SSP payment amount verification
- Considered Verified Upon Receipt (VUR)
- Found in MEDS on the “Title XVI - SSI/SSP Information” (INQX) screen

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INQX                                ** TITLE XVI -- SSI/SSP INFORMATION **                ABC - 06/13/07
                                         15:25:13
LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME MI MEDS-CUR-MMYX XX-07
MEDS-ID 123-45-6789 SSN-VER J CIN 12345678D 9 BIRTHDATE 01-01-2007 DOB-VER C

===== ELIGIBILITY STATUS INFORMATION =====
SDX-TRANS-CD 06 MEDICAID-ELIG-CD Y LAST-SDX-CHG 06-12-07
PAYMENT-STATUS C01 MASTER-FILE-TYPE BI DENIAL-DATE
SDX-EFF-DATE 04-04 MULTICATEGORY 6 DENIAL-REASON

===== INCOME AND PAYMENT INFORMATION =====
SSI-ELIG-AMT $000.00 SSI-PAID-AMT $000.00 NET-UNEARN-INC $0.00
SSP-ELIG-AMT $000.00 SSP-PAID-AMT $000.00 NET-EARNED-INC $0.00
SSP-PAID-DATE 05-01-07 DEEMED-INCOME $0.00

===== OTHER INFORMATION =====

OPTION __ <F13=VALID OPTIONS> F3=SUMMARY; F7=BACK; F8=FORWARD; ENTER=RETURN
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Processing Timelines

- The CWD will make an eligibility determination and issue benefits within 30 days following the date the signed application is received by SSA.
 - In other words, the beginning date of aid is the date the SSA receives the signed application.
 - When using GetCalFesh.org, this will be the same date the application is received by the CWD.
- Expedited Service processing timeline (3 days) begins the date the CWD receives the signed application from SSA.



GetCalFresh Demo

Questions and Answers



Email CalFreshSSI@dss.ca.gov